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Viewing cable 03ANKARA278, NORTHERN IRAQ: MASOUD BARZANI IN ANKARA: DESPITE IMPROVEMENT IN "TONE" OF RELATIONS W/GOT, TURKISH MILITARY PRESENCE IN NIRAQ UNACCEPTABLE

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
03ANKARA278	2003-01-10 16:34	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Ankara

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.taraf.com.tr/haber/karayilan-icin-bilgi-verin.htm>
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This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 ANKARA 000278

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/09/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#)

SUBJECT: NORTHERN IRAQ: MASOUD BARZANI IN ANKARA: DESPITE IMPROVEMENT IN "TONE" OF RELATIONS W/GOT, TURKISH MILITARY PRESENCE IN NIRAQ UNACCEPTABLE

REF: STATE 8041

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch. Reasons: 1.5 (B and D).

Summary and Comment

¶1. (S/REL UK) Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Masoud Barzani briefed DCM, PolMilCouns, Operation Northern Watch POLAD and UK Charge in Ankara Jan. 9 on his Jan. 7-9 meetings with Turkish officials. Barzani said the tone of Turkish official interaction had improved significantly this visit and had set the stage for the KDP to once again be Turkey's "good friend and ally" in the region. However, when the subject of possible Turkish military intervention in northern Iraq came up, Barzani told us that even if the Turks came as part of a US-led coalition, the KDP would object and would view the Turks as invaders, not liberators like the US and the UK. He said the aim of a Turkish military presence would be to strangle Kurdish aspirations and that once the Turks came in large numbers, they would never leave. The alarming problem, Barzani complained, is that if the KDP objects to Turkish participation, the Turks will accuse the KDP of being anti-coalition and pro-Saddam. If the KDP acquiesces to Turkish participation, the Turkish presence will work underground against the KDP. end Summary.

¶2. (U) KDP leader Masoud Barzani visited Ankara January 7-9 for the first time since May 2002. Barzani was accompanied by KDP "Deputy PM" Sami Abdulrahman, Politburo member Azad Barwari and KDP Ankara rep Safeen Dizayee. While in Ankara, Barzani met PM Gul, TGS D/CHOD Buyukanit, MFA U/S Ziyal and Turkish National Intelligence Organization (TNIO) Chief Atasaygun. Barzani briefed DCM, PolMilCouns, ONW POLAD and UK Charge for breakfast Jan. 9, before his meetings with the PM and D/CHOD (details of those meetings to be reported separately). Barzani told us he plans to travel from Turkey to Damascus Jan. 9 for a two-day visit before returning to northern Iraq.

¶3. (S/REL UK) Comment: The conversation with Barzani underscores the urgency of getting the Turks, KDP, PUK and appropriate US representatives into the same room at the same time to make clear the rules of the road we envision as we move forward with our Iraq planning. Clearly, there will be ruffled feathers no matter which way we go. But better to have them ruffled now and work out solutions in advance where possible than to deal with the disagreements for the first time on the ground in northern Iraq after D-day. Septel with recommendation to follow.

KDP Relations with Turks Improving

¶4. (S/REL UK) Barzani said that in his meetings with TNIO, MFA and TGS 1/7-8 the Turks had displayed a new and improved tone toward the KDP. They told him, "we assure you we have no intention of taking Kirkuk or Mosul. We want to work together with you. We respect the will of the Iraqi people. Turkey and the KDP should cooperate." Barzani replied that this position would generate positive steps from the KDP, and

that if the language of the relationship was that of mutual respect and cooperation rather than of threats, the KDP would once again be Turkey's good friend and ally in the region. Barzani emphasized Turkey's importance for northern Iraq and assured the Turks that the KDP did not seek an independent Kurdish entity. He asked them why they repeatedly accused the KDP of seeking one. The KDP supported the outcome of the London opposition conference as an expression of the will of the Iraqi people and would work on that basis for all of Iraq.

¶15. (S/REL UK) Barzani went on to say that post-Saddam Iraq should be a place where all people exist on an equal basis with protection for the rights of all individuals. He asked the Turks why they believed the KDP oppressed, or would in the future oppress, the Iraqi Turkmen. He again invited the GOT to send a parliamentary and/or MFA delegation to northern Iraq to investigate the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) accusations against the KDP so Turks could see for themselves the ITF violations of the law and the rights they enjoy nonetheless. Barzani pointed out that at London the KDP had supported granting the Iraqi Turkmen Front a second seat on the Advisory Committee to avoid hard feelings in Ankara.

London a Great Success

¶16. (S/REL UK) Turning to the London Conference, Barzani called it a great success that exceeded his personal expectations. He said the opposition and its friends and allies should be extremely satisfied. "We went in with no idea of what we could all unite behind and ended up with something very satisfying (the vision statement and the political declaration) and with good balance in the composition of the Advisory Committee." Barzani praised both the message from the White House following the conference and his and Jalal Talabani's meeting with UK PM Blair. He hoped the next steps would be as successful as London, and declared that since London "the Iraqi regime has given up all hope. After the next meeting in Salahadeen on January 20 or 21, they'll be even more angry and agitated." He said he expected the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS/Mukhabarat) to direct terror attacks against the meeting, but was confident that the KDP had the security situation on the ground under control. "We are taking all the necessary security measures," he said, but noted that Saddam was "upset and sensitive" about the whole opposition project.

¶17. (S/REL UK) DCM asked Barzani if Turkey still had concerns about the balance of the Advisory Committee. Barzani said they did, mainly about SCIRI/Shia domination. But, he said, the Shia are a majority of the population, some are Turkmen, and many are not pro-SCIRI. The Committee roughly reflects the population of Iraq although, he conceded, no one really know the demographics of Iraq today with any certainty. Barzani thought the Turks exaggerated the balance issue and said the solution is an internationally supervised census immediately after Iraq is liberated. DCM then asked if the Turks would support and facilitate access to the Salahadeen meeting. Barzani said that MFA U/S Ziyal had not been encouraging, but that Barzani would raise the issue with PM Gul later that morning. Barzani added that Iran and Syria had both promised to facilitate the access of the Committee to the area.

Barzani Against Turkish Intervention

¶18. (S/REL UK) PolMilCouns asked if the Turks had raised any military plans. Here the conversation became heated. Barzani said they had been raised in a casual manner and he expected more detail when he saw the D/CHOD later in the day. Barzani said he had responded clearly that the intervention of Turkish forces would lead to disarray and multiple problems. He wondered under what pretext the Turks planned to intervene. If to prevent the establishment of an independent Kurdish entity, the KDP would give Turkey a guarantee against it. If to prevent mass exodus, Barzani did not believe it would happen and if it did, the people wouldn't come to Turkey after their experience from the past. And Turkish intervention would draw in the Iranians making the region a battlefield for settling old scores. "Frankly," Barzani said, "we and the people of northern Iraq cannot tolerate such an intervention."

9.(S/REL UK) When the Turks asked Barzani whether Turkish military presence could be arranged through coordination with the KDP, he replied that the KDP had done so in the past for operations against the PKK and could do so again if a situation arises where Turkish assistance is needed. Barzani pointed out that Turkey already has troops in northern Iraq. They are visible and their presence is acceptable. Anything more than what is there now is not acceptable. If there were a decision for Turkish military involvement in northern Iraq, he said, that would change the circumstances and balances. He said, "Turkish military intervention is a survival matter for us. It would mean that we would fall under Turkish rule. If we can't stop that from happening, we would leave the country."

Even in US-Led Coalition

¶10. (S/REL UK) Even if the Turks came into northern Iraq as part of a coalition under US command, Barzani said, in fact under any circumstances, increased Turkish military presence would be unhelpful. Barzani pointed to the Turkish-led Peace Monitoring Force (PMF -set up in 1997 to monitor the cease-fire between the KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) as an example of why he does not want more Turkish troops there. "I'll tell you clearly what the PMF does: everything but mediation between us and the PUK. They try to train and arm the ITF, they take away historical artifacts, they engage in drug smuggling and even in assassination

plots. And they don't leave. And there are only a few hundred of them. If the US signed a document saying the Turks would leave immediately after their tasks were complete, we could consider supporting Turkish participation in northern Iraq." Barzani said he would welcome the chance to discuss with US officials whether Turkish forces were needed in northern Iraq and whether the Turks were open to a tripartite (US/TU/KDP-PUK) meeting at any level to discuss this.

¶11. (S/REL UK) Barzani, twisting his napkin and becoming emotional, continued. "My position is clear. Under any circumstances, Turkish forces will be considered an invading force whether alone or part of a coalition because Turkey's intent is not to leave. The aims of a Turkish military presence are different from those of US and UK liberators. The Turks would be there to strangle Kurdish aspirations. If this comes to pass, we will withdraw from all cooperation." He said that US authorities had repeatedly assured him that there would be no Turkish forces entering northern Iraq. "We totally dislike the idea of their presence," he said. DCM countered that while we were unaware of any decisions about Turkish participation from the US or Turkish sides, we would hope that if the Turks were there as part of the effort to change the regime in Baghdad the KDP would see Turkish participation as part of that effort and support it. DCM urged Barzani to take the issue up further with Presidential Special Envoy Khalilzad. Barzani said he would do so and underscored that the alarming consideration for the KDP was that although the Turks wanted to be in Iraq for their own aims, if the KDP opposed their participation the Turks would accuse the KDP of being anti-coalition and pro-Saddam. and if the KDP accepted Turkish participation, the Turks would work behind the scenes against the KDP, like they are doing in the PMP.

Emergency Relief Preparations in Northern Iraq

¶12. (S/REL UK) KDP "Deputy PM" Sami Abdulrahman told us that the World Food Program had begun an emergency three-month advance distribution of food rations and would follow this with another two-month advance so that the 3.6 million ration card holders in northern Iraq would soon have five months of food at home. He said the KDP had spoken at length with UNOCHI, NGOS and the ICRC and had done considerable contingency planning. "Relief does not require military intervention by Turkish forces," he said. "We've been running the administration of the region for ten years and can handle an IDP situation." KDP Ankara rep Dizayee noted that the KDP's Ministry of Humanitarian Assistance and Cooperation had completed a study of contingencies and set up a system for implementation. They would soon send a rep to the embassy in Ankara to brief us on the plans. Barzani added that the KDP would of course welcome any assistance with the relief effort, including joint studies and contributions to their system. But, Barzani said, he believed people would not move to northern Iraq in large numbers. If they did, the KDP would welcome them. But that did not mean the KDP needed Turkish forces to be present. Turkey, he said, was using protection of refugees as a pretext for intervention.
PEARSON